Donate Now
You make the difference.

10-Year-Old Confined to Wheelchair by Chronic Lyme Disease Sues Doctors, Hospitals for Medical Malpractice

After she was six years old, her illness developed a rubbing rash on her leg with a "bull's eye" bacterial signature of Lyme disease, but doctors failed to test her for it. Now she's confined to a wheelchair, can't swooning symptoms — and her parents' insurance that their hospital had prescribed Lyme disease.

By Kevin Barry Mayhill

Alice at play, circa 6. Subscribe to The Defender's Top News of the Day. It's free.

This is a story of systematic failure to see an infection was allowed to fester and, when safe, govern, drugs could have stopped it.

No, this is not a story about COVID-19. It's a story of Lyme disease.

Before a pandemic came along, Lyme disease was among the most contentious issues in medicine, a topic that inspired suffering and outrage.

As COVID-19 seems, the sick-to-be-there is still of those things. That is why a 10-year-old woman, a top representative Alumni Lyme sufferers, is suing a team of top doctors, a pediatric practice and three hospitals in New York City for medical malpractice.

If anybody can change the image and position of Lyme disease, it is Alice Shaw. Alice is a beautiful, bright and articulate girl who, at age 10, is confined to a wheelchair. She is in pain 24/7. She is in a muscle, bright, she maybe, she will get to.

First, her odyssey.

Alice was born in Manhattan.

When she was 18 years old — then an active, softball-playing dancer and Girl Scout — Lyme developed a rash on her leg with two red concentric circles and a central red bulls-eye.

The physics her father took, date-stamped Sept. 19, 2013, depict a textbook symptom of an infection that afflicts a half-million Americans a year: Lyme disease.

Nonetheless, at her pediatrician's office three days later, Jane was not diagnosed with Lyme disease or even tested for it, despite the scene of a simple and a telltale infection.

Instead, the advice suggested then, as recorded in her chart, was "Benadryl cream."

Over the next two years, what error was compounded repeatedly to a medical failure. Alice's rash grew to large discs, bassed on one — but no the only — set of treatment guidelines.

Rather, doctors said Alice's rash "looked like" ringworm.

When the father suggested Alice's bizarre illness might be the problem — and even brought in photographs of the rash — doctors at the practice and hospital reviewed erroneous antibiotic treatment, instructed by SUBJ, that Alice had to her feet her for the first time in months.

Ultimately, Jane's case in New York Hospital, rested on a 30-year-old diagnostic test that failed to detect some 40% of early infections and is widely acknowledged to be inaccurate.

Yet her, the test registered some, but not enough, indication to be positive. Doctors ruled out Lyme disease as "unlikely." They never looked further.

Jane said that she could understand that some doctors were uninformed or initially perplexed by her case. They really don't think Lyme disease did this," she said. But she could not understand that 20 doctors in her medical file, in reality, to consider the possibilities or and published studies one, late-stage Lyme disease.

Instead, she became the problem.

"At an eleven-year-old child, I was mistreated and made to feel crazy," she said. "I have been blamed for damaging to my ill it's been for my illness. I've been told it was anxiety."

After her descent into paraplegia, Julie was told, in various ways, that she could walk if only she tried.

Among these, Julie's wheelchair would be taken to see if she would get up to use the hospital bathroom, forcing her father to carry her. Physical therapists told her her illness legs when she stood, occasionally drawing blood, to test for a response.

The use of "truth serum" was even suggested, Enrico Bruzzese's timeline states.

Once, Julie woke to a group of what seemed like 20 doctors in her room. "They were all standing around my bed, staring at me," she said. "I was terrified. I was literally [sic], "nothing" to the process ushered the group out.

Most dramatically, the timeline recounts, a hospital psychiatrist met with Julie and her father, apparently to see if she would run brief.

In her 11-year-old recollection, Julie said she was dragged down a hallway, crying and saying she was in pain. "He took all my weight and then he dropped me," she told me.

Julie said she got the message. "You may not know this," she summarized it for me. "But you are making this up."

Julie's timeline, as written by her father, was assembled for an appeal to her insurance company to pay for Lyme disease treatment, which the insurance eventually denied.

She was denied three times, a decision that insurers are emboldened to make by the Lyme guidelines they choose to follow and not the more aggressive the long-term implications of chronic Lyme disease.

As a result, families suffer huge financial burdens. By 2019, Erica Bruzzese had dissolved his pension, but his job to his job's caregiver, and incurred more than $100,000 in debt.

Today she now very difficult one in his life, he said, when living the family's home, "Living everything," never to be predictably. "I was willing to give it all up," he said, "just to get back."

A small sample of the appeal gives a sense of what this child endured.

Bruzzese wrote:

"On May 15, 2015, Julie had an acute onset of abdominal pain that spiraled into a host of symptoms, which escalated but was not limited to headache, stiff neck, back pain, chest pain, severe abdominal pain, hair loss, fever, chills, sweating, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, loss of appetite, heat, tingling sensations of the fingertips and toes, electrically shock-like pressure and body temperature, brain fog, concentration difficulties, memory problems, severe deficit and fluctuations of the processing of information.

Julie has been unable to walk or move her legs from the hips down, and her lower extremities have been severely cold to the touch. She has been wheelchair-bound since June 5, 2015 ...

"I stressed Tyler and Anita learn disease for over two years allowed the disease to progress to the point where [a doctor] Julie] saying 'Dysautonomia' and 'Lyme disease' and 'Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' [CFS], disseminated bacteria, cognitive impairment, seizure and hypothyroidism [legal blindness], insomnia, osteopenia, atrophy, migratory muscle and joint pain, hypersensitivity, neurological abnormalities, seizures, severe fatigue, and cognitive dysfunction, which are all symptoms of late-stage Lyme disease."

[Julie's former] alleges that all of this — including paraplegia and paralysis — is a consequence of the failure to recognize and treat her for Lyme disease.

The defendants have denied all claims in the lawsuit, filed in March 2021.

After the Paper

By Julie's health declined in the spring of 2015, her parents felt isolated and berated and were questioning whether the doctors were right.

Then, in the summer of 2015, Julie's mother's problems, and we were not sure if it was Lyme disease, but we knew that it was not MS.

Even as his daughter went from walking unsteadily to walking with help, to not walking at all by June of 2015, Enrico Bruzzese said they had no reason to question doctors' opinions.

That all changed in September 2015 when, in her wheelchair, Julie innocently caught a blessing from Pope Francis on his arrival at JFK Airport and became the focus of news worldwide.

The brief but tearful exchange, between a Pontiff and a determined-altar girl who had been wheelchair-bound, would lead to an outpouring of help and support of numbers no one saw it.

At last, doors were opened. Laboratories tests showed evidence of the tick-borne infections, including Lyme disease, babesiosis, bartonella and ehrlichiosis. She received treatment, too, that did not cure her long-ignored condition but helped.

Julie's medical odyssey is chronicled in dramatic detail in a critically acclaimed paper published in the Journal of Pediatric Infectious Diseases & Immunology in the denial and part of Lyme disease infection.

For the record, I appear in the film, in which I describe the underrecognized toll of Lyme disease in wards to that became to the case. I've been lying for a year.

Ignorance of the scope of its tick-borne illness — driven largely by a one-size-fits-all cure model — has hindered patients' access to treatment. Consequences, in the most tragic outrights in cases are common.

But Julie's case holds great promise, both because of the facts — a rash, no treatment, symptoms miscriminated — and because of her recovery and resilience.

It's the connection a jury that unheeded Lyme disease can be and that effective the no-big-deal image of the infection morphs into what many know it is: a debilitating and life-changing illness.

My parents took me to a pediatric practice twice. When a vast some back pain, they were told I was depressed.

On an August morning days later, [Joseph, 17, collapsed on his bed in his Poughkeepsie, New York, home with what would later be ruled Lyme carditis. He died from later — a victim of an unreliable, yet fatal, test that he likely had been known to have.

In a report in *Cardiovascular Pathology* journal two years later strictly documented the damage to Joseph's heart. There, in color, were images of his stopped thorna-lacingMyer syndrome, the causative agent of Lyme disease.

Like Julie, Joseph was not treated with a regimen what I could do with my heart. He have spared him. "Lyme carditis is a self-limited condition," the journal article states. "Most Lyme carditis cases is typically explained with timely treatment and severe complications are rare."

Because of the stigma that surrounds its cure, Lyme disease stands alone as an illness doctors fear to treat.

Some shiny science publications emphasize the guidelines-inspired fear of overdiagnosis, ironically from falsely positive tests, a cure is common in their questionnaire only.

Like studies, on the other hand, address the risks of not treating — with, much short-sought, like that was the path chosen in both Julie's and Joseph's cases.

In a post-script on the loss of people, the authors of this case report remarked:

"We remember Joseph as a kind, gentle, and caring person. Based on his interest in science and his compassionate nature, we believe he would have pursued a career in medicine to understand the disease that ultimately claimed his life."

But has anything changed so very much happened a decade ago to these two children?

Dr. Robert Bransfield, a chronic Lyme disease expert, said no.

"It is still happening today," said Bransfield, a psychiatrist who has worked in medical malpractice cases and seen suicides, overdoses and homicides result from misdiagnosed Lyme disease. "Lyme disease is a multisystem illness that can cause any symptom in any organ system. It is the great imitator and can present with many symptoms."

Perhaps by many purposes with help. In a recent lawsuit from Vermont, a hospital and doctor were ordered to pay $6.5 million in the Lyme patients death of a 25-year-old man in 2017.

He was told — twice — that his "*highly target group*" male was a skin infection. It's like a state with among the nation's highest rates of Lyme.

Never happen again

Significantly, Julie's and Joseph's lawsuits were filed by the same lawyer, Michael Ramirez of Manhattan. Although nearly 600 documents combined are part of their medical records, Ramirez has yet to seen a file from one. This is a matter of in these cases. And proving right and wrong?

For Julie's father, a measure of justice has already been achieved.

"For me, I already won," Enrico Bruzzese told me. "I wanted the doctors who did this wrong to get a summons with her name on it. I wanted to see it served to her."

They rejected the whole idea that Lyme was an issue, period," he said. "They never considered it could be responsible for Julie's problems."

Nonetheless, Bruzzese acknowledges he is worried about Julie's future. He would like assurances, which her lawsuit may provide, that she will never be sick.

For her part, Julie is moving forward. She is in a pre-med program at Long Island University and is determined to be a doctor herself. She is 19.

"Once I realized I couldn't do the hobbies I used to love without the use of my legs," she noted me. "I wanted to explore what I could do with my hands."

Her father is humbled by Julie's optimism. "It's search for her demeanor, her disposition, this would be so much harder," he told me in the wake of her 19 surgeries and procedures.

"That's always critiqued to accept that she is Lyme. I have Lyme, and I'm not going to let it take my life over."

This article was originally published at Total Site News and is being reprinted with permission.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Children's Health Defense.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE DEFENDER - It's Free!
Name | Email | SIGN UP

SUGGEST A CORRECTION

Mary Beth Pfeiffer
Mary Beth Pfeiffer is an investigative journalist who is recognized for her groundbreaking, award-winning coverage of COVID-19 by issuing a book.

Tip us for free news and updates from Children's Health Defense. Click Donate on the top menu to defend the health of our children and nature's power for those injured. We can't do it without your support.

Republishing Guidelines

Children's Health Defense Comment Policy
We welcome relevant and respectful comments. Off-topic or boilerplate comments may be deleted.
Please read our Comments Policy before commenting.

0 Comments | Login

Join the discussion...

LOG IN WITH | OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name | Share | Newest | Oldest

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe | Add Disqus to your site | Privacy | DISQUS

Latest News
Previous
Vaccine Injury Compensation Program Awards $4.2 Million to Family of Florida Physician
Tips for 'Nonprofit' Medical Boards to Protect Doctors' Rights and Combat Corruption
Previous
Ukraine Biolabs Conspiracy Movement — Is It Distracting Russia's Top?

Get FREE News & Updates!
Email
SIGN UP

Get Text Alerts
Sign up for breaking news from The Defender.
Text "defender" to 898211 to get started.
Standard text messaging rates apply. Consent is not a condition of purchase. Message frequency varies. You can unsubscribe at any time by replying STOP or clicking the unsubscribe link (where available) in one of our messages. View our Privacy Policy and Terms of Service.
CONTINUE

year later she began presenting with peculiar symptoms of muscle paralysis in her lower right limb, a general anterior muscular weakness with a drop foot. She began seeing various physicians; but none came up with a definitive diagnosis. I finally got her to phone a friend's wife who is an LPN and reiki master and is apparently clairvoyant. This person told her to make an appointment with a local holistic specialist and be tested for Lyme. She tested positive for five tick borne bacteria and began herbal treatments. These treatments did not seem to be working, so she went to a different holistic practitioner whose treatments were no better. She finally went to a neurologist who did a spinal tap and found the bacteria in her CSF. At that point, she finally agreed to try a course of doxycycline; but, I do not know whether she was prescribed a brand that can be taken with food and the doxy she did take upset her stomach, so she refused to continue taking it. I'd been dealing with tick bites for years; but, I had never really fully researched doxy and did not know that doxy crosses the blood-brain barrier. If I had known that, I would have stressed that she not stop the doxy, make certain the brand she was taking could be taken with food; and, begin taking it, again,

see more

0 0 Reply • Share ›

LinUK
14 hours ago

This could have been written about my daughter except she had the 'bullseye' rash when she was 15. Here in the UK if you mention Lyme disease to a doctor you might as well say you've been abducted by aliens.
She's 48 now and has become progressively more disabled physically and mentally, since she was bitten.

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Christine L
14 hours ago

Can you imagine ? You are in a hospital, surrounded by 20 doctors, who want to prove you are making this up, and while everybody watches, they DROP you. This must feel like gang rape. You are being hurt while people WATCH. And it's not rape, I agree, but they are supposed to CARE for you. PTSD anyone ? How can anyone recover from that? This is incredible cruelty.

0 0 Reply • Share ›

DeanWormer
15 hours ago

Wow. Sounds like there has been little progress with this problem since the 1990's. I remember 3 people who ultimately got cured of Lyme before long term damage but had to persist through false negative test results by getting tested 2 or more times in order to start doxycycline. The next problem would be obtaining a long enough course of the antibiotic. In the 1990's the Long Island, NY whitetail deer herd was more confined within eastern Suffolk County than today. Physicians there saw many more Lyme cases than those located a few miles further west. Saving the tick and bringing it to someone who knows what to do with it can help.

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Auntjenjen Churro
17 hours ago

Man I'd be a millionaire if I could sue over what happened to me in march 2020 as a plandemic nurse who became a patient and now a disabled lonhauler spending thousands on trying to get better since I was left I critical symptoms, with no help. Also c-pstd from it and I'm pretty tough.... but, prep act 1984...can't sue if the plandemic flag is raised. The care? No visitors? No real doctors?...

0 0 Reply • Share ›

JS
17 hours ago

How bad are those doctors…

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Beckie
20 hours ago edited

So sad. I think she will win her court case, especially with the father's bullseye skin rash documentation.

It is so important to check for ticks and if found, you, not your doc, send it off to a lab for analysis. We have the Sonoma County Public Health Lab in Northern CA that does the test, no matter where you live, once/week. There is also a place called Tick Check in Pennsylvania https://www.tickcheck.com/

There is a protocol from a study (link below) that finds a single dose of 200 mgs doxycycline given within 72 hours of a tick bite greatly reduces the chance for getting Lyme. I have never had a problem finding a doctor to give me that preventive dose of doxy to keep on hand just in case of a bite. In light of this study, if you're denied then find a doc that knows how to read.
https://www.nejm.org/doi/fu...

0 0 Reply • Share ›

Sara Woods
8 hours ago

I have had Lyme since 2008 and this does not sound like 'just' Lyme. She likely has a co-infection like Babesia. Maybe the article said this. I didn't see it. Conventional approaches offer diminishing returns. Having helped many with Lyme in my practice, I can tell you it does go chronic and remains that way for life; it is treatable with herbs and supplements; and you can live a long happy life WITH Lyme and its co-infections.

Her story is unique in that she acquired POTS and paraplegia. Very rare which indicates some other condition: perhaps vaccine injury in there as well as co-infections. I suspect babesia since symptoms are like Lyme on steroids, but there are many others: bartonella, anaplasmosis, and then the underlying factors like EBV, cytomegalolavirus etc.

People are searching for LLMD (Lyme-literate MDs) so that tells you something about the conventional approach. Find an herbalist with knowledge of Lyme...like me. Or find a good DO, naturopath, functional doc, that can address the real cause, not just chase symptoms.

0 1 Reply • Share ›

Subscribe Privacy Do Not Sell My Data

Children's Health Defense®

Children's Health Defense® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to end childhood health epidemics by working aggressively to eliminate harmful exposures, hold those responsible accountable and establish safeguards to prevent future harm. We fight corruption, mass surveillance and censorship that put profits before people as well as advocate for worldwide rights to health freedom and bodily autonomy.

EN

SUBSCRIBE - IT'S FREE! BECOME A MEMBER MEMBER LOGIN

Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. EIN #26-0388604

Children's Health Defense • Legal Disclaimer • Terms of Use • Privacy Policy • Donate • Work for CHD • Whistleblowers Welcome • Contact • Social • Sitemap

© 2016 - 2023 Children's Health Defense® • All Rights Reserved